

Approved For Release 2004/10/27 : CIA-RDP79M00096A000400040007-2

-1-

25X1

[ ] thoughts on COINS problems:

17 Sept. 73

To gain perspective on COINS and try to make this simply and directly apparent to others, can we answer the following:

Who are using COINS now?

How do they use it?

What do they think of what they have now?

What do they think it would take to make it "right"?

One view may be that you can't get there from here -- i.e., that there is no way to create a totally centralized data base, inasmuch as each analyst feels he needs a mechanism structured to his own problem, his own needs, his own way of marshalling and presenting his own particular subject matter.

One needs, in considering how to improve COINS as a total system, to obtain more personalized experience from analysts, to help us characterize the current problem and status.

No one wants to look at the problems.

What should COINS be? : -- DIA, CIA, NSA, STATE Production people all have internal systems to retrieve information. As a general retrieval system, serving all topics, all areas of geog, all types of analysts, the problem is to get all this all source material into COINS, and then to start working on the branch file problem.

The question is: how much more can COINS do? And then ask, how much more can COINS do in the face of the branch file problem? [ ] thinks that the branch files cannot be ~~eliminated~~.

25X1

e.g., machine tools are general purpose and special purpose types. So with COINS, it is a general purpose tool, whereas a branch file is a special purpose tool.

e.g., CIRIS is a general purpose tool; a CIRIS-like system would break down, be a battleship with wings, if one tried to construct in this single system all the words and vocabulary networks required to collect data capable of responding to all the possible issues that the intelligence community wants to study. Analogous to COINS problem.

More on the branch file problem: an analyst in one agency will not be willing to adopt the view of another agency on a given subject -- this may not be an unreasonable attitude, because part of any set of substantive files is a reflection of the analyst's point of view to that subject, and a reflection of that analyst's method of handling his specialty.

More on the branch file problem: the maintenance of files must be timely; the branch analyst must believe and feel he can trust his files. If maintenance responsibility is separated from the immediate user analyst very far, this strong feeling is destroyed and the working procedure of the analyst is significantly changed. Remember that the branch files contain much analytical work that is not published; still this is important, and it represents, in varying degrees, the product of analyst effort; it is embodied and reflected in branch level files, but whether it could be reflected ~~in higher levels of organization~~ in files maintained at a more centralized level than the branch is questionable.

25X1

[ ] thinks branch files could not go on line for community use, at least not in the short run. To conceive of doing this it will be necessary for each analyst to be totally interrelated with a machine that is located on his own desk.

Another problem re branch files: each branch looks on these as proprietary, belonging to their own organization. Any change will involve a behavioral change, and this may be hard. [ ] thinks this a big problem. He suggests that any attempt to change this attitude should be worked out only after careful study with consultants who are behavioral psychologists.

25X1

Some branch files are simply materials in 4-drawer safes. Some branch files are partly computerized retrieval systems, built around the models developed by particular analysts. (Check into QUICKTRACK). Some files are simply general purpose information retrieval files.

25X1

[ ] says: put NOIWON bulletins into COINS.